



Commonwealth of Kentucky Labor Cabinet

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Wage Theft in Kentucky is More Than Double All Types of Robbery Combined

Kentucky Labor Cabinet collects \$4.5 million in wage restitution each year for an average of 12,200 Kentucky workers

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 28, 2014) – Money taken each year in Kentucky during all robberies combined falls well short of the total amount of wages improperly withheld from Kentucky’s workers. The Kentucky Labor Cabinet collects an average of \$4.5 million each year in wage restitution for employees, and that total far surpasses the average annual amount of \$2 million taken during all robberies in the Commonwealth.

“You hear about robberies on the news all the time, but wage theft is a bigger problem,” said Kentucky Labor Cabinet Secretary Larry Roberts. “Wage theft happens every day in Kentucky, and it impacts numerous industries and multiple types of workers. Not only are employees cheated, but taxpayers are as well, because no payroll taxes are paid on that money unless the Labor Cabinet collects it as restitution for the employees.”

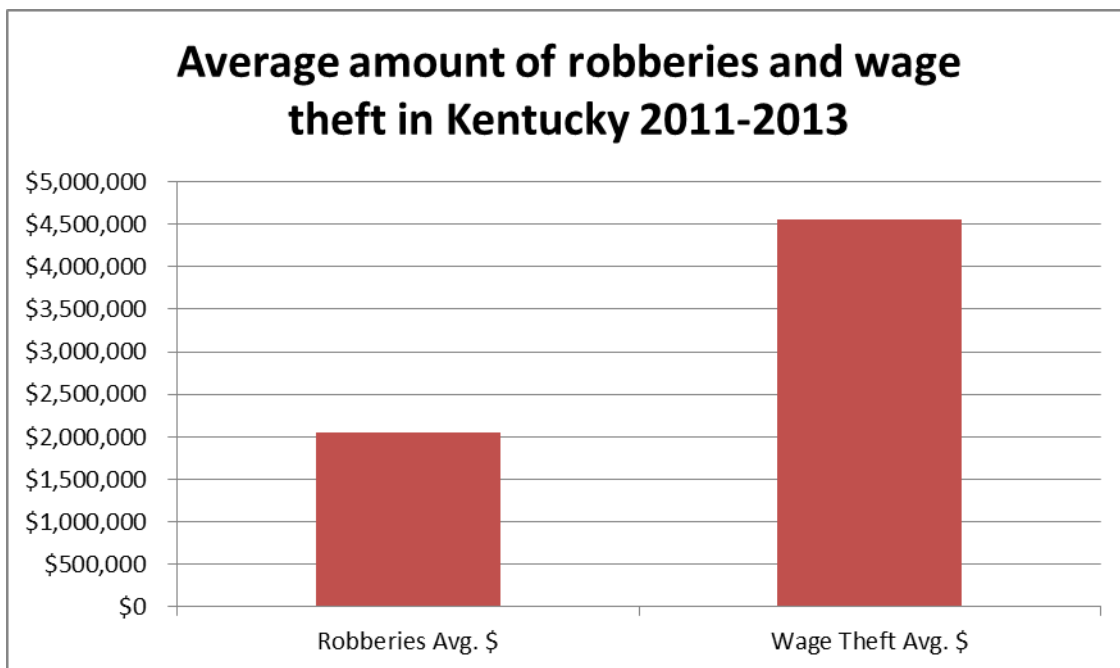
What is wage theft?

Unpaid overtime, withheld final paychecks, illegal deductions of pay and lower pay than the legal minimum wage requirement are common examples of wage theft. Other examples include misclassification of workers as independent contractors, unpaid breaks, time-clock shaving, mandatory tip-pooling and prevailing wage violations. Many wage theft cases go unreported because victims are unaware they are being cheated.

The Labor Cabinet is the agency charged with enforcing wage and hour laws in Kentucky. There are 15 wage and hour field inspectors to cover the 1.9 million wage-earners in Kentucky. This means there is one investigator for every 126,600 workers.

The Labor Cabinet used information from the Kentucky State Police's annual report, *Crime in Kentucky*, to compare robbery totals to the latest wage restitution amounts for the past three years in Kentucky.

For this report, robbery is defined as the taking anything of value under confrontational circumstances from the control, custody or care of another person by force or threat of force and/or by putting the victim in fear of immediate harm. Robbery totals do not include burglaries.



Robberies average \$2 million a year in Kentucky

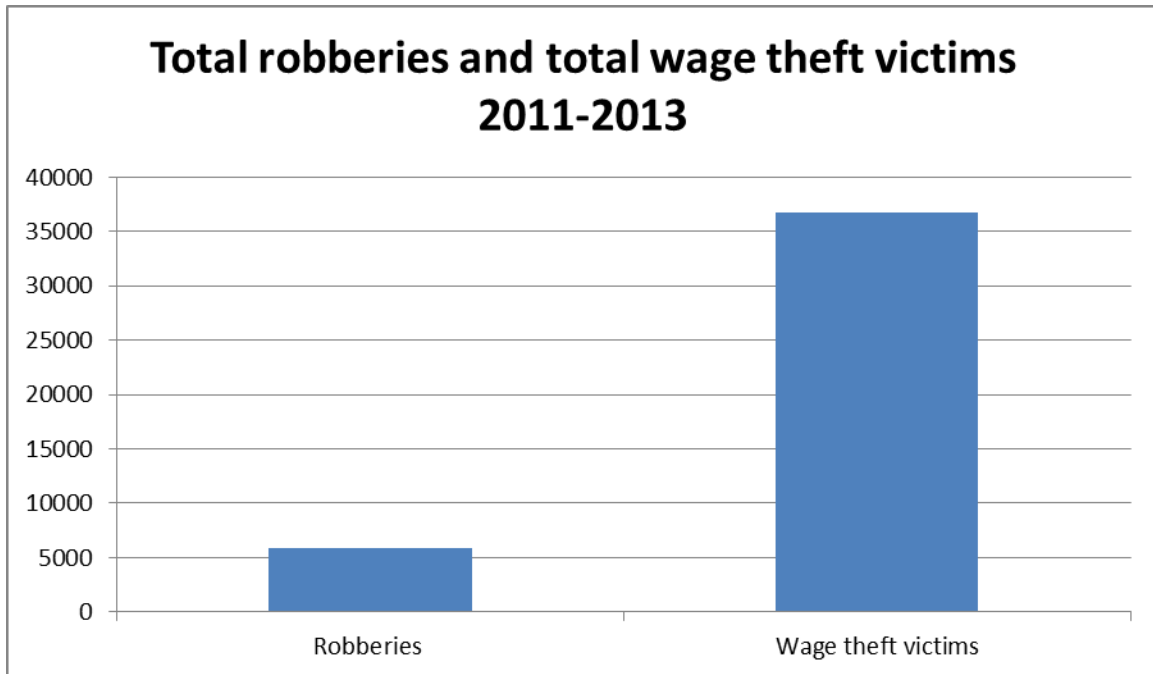
The total value of items taken during all robberies was \$2,568,236 for 2013, \$2,131,150 for 2012 and \$1,454,190 for 2011. The average amount for those three years was \$2,051,192.

Wage theft averages \$4.5 million a year in Kentucky

For wage restitution, the Kentucky Labor Cabinet collected \$4,376,588 in 2013, \$6,035,364 in 2012 and \$3,260,501 in 2011. Those three years averaged \$4,557,484 in wage restitution each year.

Each year in Kentucky: 12,200 wage theft victims compared to 1,900 robberies

The number of wage theft victims far exceeds robbery victims in Kentucky. For all robberies in Kentucky, including banks, chain and convenience stores, homes, commercial offices, highway/street and miscellaneous robberies, there were 5,813 offenses combined during the last three years, for an average of 1,937 a year. For wage theft from 2011-13, there were 36,794 employees who were victims, for an average of 12,264 each year.



Employees who suspect they are victims of wage theft can fill out a wage and hour [complaint form](#) online at www.labor.ky.gov.

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The Kentucky Labor Cabinet's primary responsibility is to ensure that divisions and offices falling under the auspices of the Cabinet work within the jurisdiction of Kentucky labor law to ensure equitable and fair treatment of the Commonwealth's more than 1.9 million wage-earning employees. The Cabinet, according to regulation, has the duties, responsibilities, power, and authority relating to labor, wage and hour issues, occupational safety and health of employees, child labor, apprenticeship, workers' compensation insurance, and all other matters under the jurisdiction of the Labor Cabinet. For more information, visit www.labor.ky.gov.

